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ABSTRACT

Cultural differences, socioeconomic conditions, broken homes, and other problems are not grounds for allowing criminal acts to go unchallenged on school property. This publication shows administrators how to control and reduce the incidence of criminal acts, which create fear, anxiety, hostility, and a loss of confidence in the educational system. Timely information gathering through a uniform reporting system is a must. Written reports should specify what, when, who, and why, and actions taken. Incident profiling, a process for analyzing security data, requires a clear understanding of the types of events to be reported and common legal terms. Definitions are provided for various crimes against persons and property. Developing an incident profile form is advised and a sample provided. Locations can be more accurately reported if school floor plans are divided into building zones. A number of precautionary steps to reduce schools' vulnerability are listed, including (1) inventorying all equipment; (2) requiring weekly inventories of tape recorders, cameras, and foodstuffs; (3) securing all school equipment at night; (4) counting money in a secure place with limited access; (5) controlling keys; and (6) being security conscious. Other steps are outlined to protect students and staff. Sample security measures for three school systems are provided, along with four references. (MLH)

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THE PRACTITIONER

nassp

A Newsletter for the On-Line Administrator

Vol. XIII, No. 4 (ISSN 0192-6160) June, 1987

School Security Management

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School Security Management

It is time to take the fear out of dealing with criminal acts that occur on school property. School administrators can control and reduce the incidence of criminal acts, which create fear, anxiety, hostility, and a loss of confidence in the educational system.

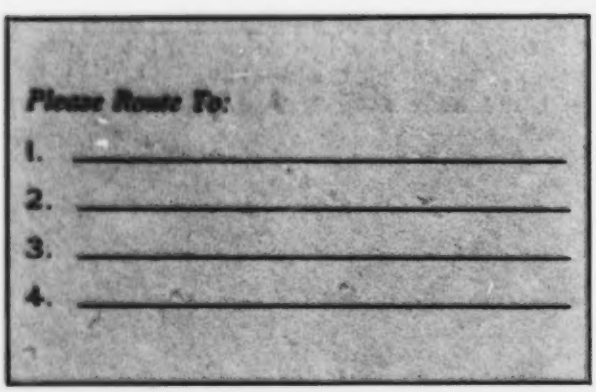
Cultural differences, socioeconomic conditions, broken homes, and other problems are not grounds for allowing criminal acts to go unchallenged on school property. If there is one lesson the educational community has learned, it is that crime cannot be tolerated at the school.

Information — The Key to Control

A school administrator cannot control unwanted and unacceptable behavior without timely and accurate security data. The only way to gather, store, and retrieve information is through a uniform reporting system. Every administrator must prepare written reports of security incidents. These reports should detail the facts of the event and answer pertinent questions.

The more details gathered at the time of the incident, the more likely it is that the facts will be accurate and that the intervention strategies will be timely. Timeliness improves the quality of the information gathered and reduces the opportunity for collusion among or between the participants.

"A school administrator cannot control unwanted and unacceptable behavior without timely and accurate security data."



What happened?

Have the victims and witnesses prepare a written narrative about their perceptions of the events. Be specific. This is no time for creative writing. It is desirable to first isolate those involved and have them tell a staff person everything that happened. This explanation should then be reduced to a written and signed document, and should be read to each individual. A question-and-answer section may be added at the close of the statement if the individuals do not provide a logical or sequential order of events. To the experienced investigator, a written statement provides a tremendous amount of data about the persons making the statements. If, for example, a person being interviewed is not telling the truth, the statement will often be filled with inconsistencies.

A written statement also helps to determine what type of crime, if any, was committed. A student reports her purse was "robbed." What does this mean? Did someone forcibly take her purse from her (a robbery), or was her purse left unattended in the cafeteria (a larceny), or did she just forget where she left her purse (a lost property)? It makes a difference. A robbery is a felony, but the stolen purse is a larceny. Depending on the amount of money or other valuables in the purse, it may be a misdemeanor. And, of course, the lost purse is no crime at all.

When did it happen?

Is the complaint new or did it happen a week ago? When a report states, "stolen sometime in September," there is little hope of recovering the stolen items. Time is important in identifying possible suspects and checking out alibis. Specifically, record the class or period in which an incident takes place so that attendance and truancy records can be checked.

Where did it happen?

Knowing where an event occurred is critical to identifying any pattern. If the crime is a serious one, such as personal injury, the police may want to conduct a search. It will be necessary to station an adult at the scene and deny access to anyone other than the police/security.

If a pattern of incidents emerges, the administration may want to provide additional adult supervision, particularly at critical times.

Who was involved?

The names of all victims, witnesses, suspects, and people who were in the area at the time of the incident should be recorded. The record should include full name, home address, home phone, class grade, date of birth, sex, and race.

It is very helpful to take note of chronic victims or perennial witnesses. The same people are often involved in and around trouble, particularly when the event is a fight or an assault. It is not difficult to identify the combatants. They are usually out of breath, with disheveled clothes, anxiously awaiting someone to intervene. The astute administrator looks for familiar faces in the crowd.

Why did it happen?

This question is not always easy to answer; therefore, it may not appear in the final report. It should always be investigated. Rarely does an incident occur in isolation; generally there are "indicators" that lead up to the incident. A major altercation occurring at the close of school usually requires some planning.

These critical indicators are what effective security management is all about. Knowing "why" places the administrator in a strong position to prevent future incidents.

What action was taken?

The answers to this question establish the credibility of the reporting administrator. Every action report should include the name, date, and time each person was notified. If a student was injured, it should include names of those who accompanied him or her to the hospital. If police were involved, a record of the time and who responded should be provided.

The action report becomes even more important if a civil lawsuit develops from the incident. Generally, lawsuits develop long after the actual incident--sometimes years. It is a comforting feeling to open a file and find a detailed report, including the actions taken in response to the incident.

Analyzing the Incident

Incident profiling is a process for analyzing security data. Profiling requires a clear understanding of the types of events to be reported. Before discussing the incident profile form, it is important to be familiar with a few of the more common legal terms used in profiling and their customary operational definitions.

CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY

- Arson - The willful and malicious burning or attempt to burn property belonging to another.
- Bombing - Use of any device containing combustible material and a fuse. Threat to detonate such a device.
- Burglary- The unlawful removal, taking or carrying away of property from a school building that is legally closed (after all employees have left and the building is secured).
- Drugs/Narcotics/Alcohol - Any illegal substance, including alcohol, which, when taken internally or inhaled, causes a change in a person's behavior.
- Larceny/Theft - The unlawful taking of property belonging to another with the intent of depriving the rightful owner of access to or use of the property. This offense occurs when the school is legally open.
- Vandalism - The willful and malicious destruction of property belonging to another.

CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS

- Assault - The unprovoked physical attack of one person against another.
- Fighting - Equal participation between one or more individuals.
- Extortion - The use of "mild" threats or intimidation to demand money or something of value that is under the direct control of another.
- Sex Offenses - Include rape, sodomy, child abuse, child molestation, indecent exposure, sexual behavior with a consenting minor, obscene phone calls.
- Trespassing - The unlawful presence on school property.
- Weapons - Any object that can reasonably be used to inflict bodily injury.

Filing Data

In the interest of consistent reporting and record keeping, an Incident Profile Form is recommended. The IP form organizes all the information needed for incident profiling. These forms should be filed in one central location and reviewed weekly or bi-weekly to determine if patterns or trends are developing.

Three pieces of data are particularly important to a weekly or bi-weekly review:

Day of week
Time of day (class period)
Location of offense

The time of day should also include the class period. Very often in crimes involving property, the exact time of the offense is unknown but the time of discovery should be recorded. In offenses against persons, the time is usually known and should be recorded. In either case, the class period is important information.

To quickly record the location of an offense, develop a floor plan of the school with zones for the building. Knowing, for example, that a locker theft occured in locker #1343 is not very helpful in planning intervention strategies. What is helpful is knowing that locker #1343 is located in Zone #6, which is the back corridor, on the first floor of A wing.

A review of IP data very quickly discloses if any patterns exist for day, time, and location. Such information provides a sound basis for deployment of security resources.

INCIDENT PROFILE FORM

Offense: Primary _____ Sub 1 _____ Sub 2 _____
Location _____ Time _____ Day _____ Date _____
Describe Situation _____
_____
Property Stolen/Dest. _____ Value _____

Offender: Name _____ age ___ sex ___ race ___ grade _____

Victim: Name _____ age ___ sex ___ race ___ grade _____

Actions: Parents contacted? Describe reaction _____ _____
_____

Administrative Action _____
_____

Police/Security Action _____
_____

A number of precautionary steps can be taken to reduce a school's vulnerability to criminal activity. These precautionary steps may be grouped under two categories -- property and people.

Property

1. Inventory all equipment with serial numbers:

   Audiovisual equipment
   Office machines
   Business education equipment
   Language lab equipment
   Musical instruments
   Custodial equipment such as floor buffers, vacuum cleaners, and lawn mowers
   Shop equipment
   Cameras
   Science room equipment such as microscopes and scales

2. Inventory equipment without serial numbers and supplies that are prone to theft (athletic equipment, chemicals, food in cafeteria, and contents of vending machines.)

3. Require weekly inventories of tape recorders, cameras, and food-stuffs.

   Require quarterly inventories of all other equipment.

   Assign a person to be responsible for the inventory.

4. Require school equipment to be stored in a secure area each night.

   Insist that all storage rooms be locked at all times.

   Limit access to storage rooms to authorized individuals.

   Set up a sign-out and sign-in sheet for equipment not assigned to the classroom.

   Do not allow equipment to be taken home without a signed receipt.

   Discourage teachers and students from bringing personal equipment to the school.

   Require a signed receipt for all equipment sent out for repair.

- Physically check all incoming equipment. (Look inside the boxes--don't just count them.)
- Have the school's name painted on all large pieces of school equipment.
- Immediately report all lost, stolen, or missing equipment.
- Report the loss of all equipment with serial numbers to security or the police so that an entry in the FBI's NCIC (National Crime Information Center) file can be made.

5. When counting money, do so in a secure place with limited access.

- Always have two people count money and sign a receipt.
- Do not leave money in the school overnight.
- Have all vending machines emptied of coins each day.
- When students bring money to school for a special purpose, have teachers collect the money during the first period and turn it into the office immediately.
- Special precautions should be implemented when money is being collected for yearbooks, class rings, class pictures, and fund drives.
- Vary the routine of bank deposit, i.e, different routes and times.
- Discourage teachers and students from carrying large sums of money to school.

6. Control keys to the school

- Have recipients sign for all keys.
- Check periodically to see if the listed person has the keys.

7. Be security conscious

- Talk about the need for security at faculty meetings and in meetings with students. Make everyone a part of your security team.
- Involve students and staff in the identification of security concerns and in the formulation of security plans for coping with these concerns.

- Do not place signs advertising the contents of a room.
- Vary the routine of supervising employees.

People

1. Post a sign at the entrance to the school directing all visitors to report to the main office.
   - Provide a sign-in sheet for visitors, requesting name, address, who they want to see, and time of arrival and departure.
   - Never allow a stranger to go to a classroom and pick up a student. Always have the student come to the office to ensure that the student knows the person who is calling.
   - Challenge all unknown persons found in the school or on school grounds.
2. In schools where parking is permitted, require a student/faculty parking sticker.
3. Schedule adult surveillance of student gathering places, i.e., bathrooms, student parking lots, stairwells, and courtyards.
   - Require teachers to be at classroom doorways during class changing times.
   - Insist upon adequate adult supervision for all evening and cocurricular activities.
4. Stress that students and staff members have primary responsibility for their own person and property.

To Illustrate

Fairfax County Public Schools
Office of Security Services
Jerrel Daughtry, Director

5025 Sideburn Rd.
Fairfax, Va. 22032

Security Services are staffed by a director, assistant director, secretary, four supervisors, and 14 patrol personnel. Their primary mission is after-hours physical plant security, accomplished by random patrol of school facilities and an electronic Security Intrusion System (SIS). The SIS is utilized when the buildings are unoccupied.

Security patrol personnel normally work 4 p.m. - 8 a.m. Monday through Friday and 24 hours on weekends and holidays. Facilities are scattered throughout approximately 425 square miles of Fairfax County, Fairfax City, and the towns of Vienna and Herndon.

Security has a direct line to the Fairfax County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and enjoys an excellent working relationship with both the police and fire departments. County police K-9 vehicles are equipped with mobile radios enabling them to monitor security radio traffic and respond quickly to alarm locations. This also enhances coordination at the scene.

Security Services personnel have no arrest authority beyond that of an ordinary citizen, but they are instrumental in the apprehension of numerous intruders each year.

Palm Beach County School District
Department of Security
Kenneth Scrimsher, Director

3323 Belvedere Rd.
West Palm Beach, Fla. 33402

The Palm Beach County Department of Security has 25 fully certified law enforcement officers placed in secondary schools as security specialists. The schools report that the presence of the security officers provides a valuable addition to the total school environment. Crimes have decreased on the campuses where security officers are assigned.

In addition to a normal daytime schedule, security officers also work at activities held after school and in the evenings. Security personnel receive training as outlined by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

Communications

A seven-day week, 24-hour day communication system is maintained among security personnel, schools, and central office. A five-person staff is responsible for maintenance of Florida Crime Information Center/National Crime Information Center (FCIC/NCIC) equipment. Two-way radios are maintained in all county vehicles, including the school buses. The staff monitors the two-way radios, the countywide pager system, and emergency channels (civil defense). They also activate and monitor the district's intrusion alarm system when schools are not in session.

Intrusion Alarm

The intrusion alarm system is the result of extensive planning and research by a security committee formed in September 1982. Motorola INTRAC 2,000 equipment is installed in 102 schools, as well as in administrative and support offices. The system is cost worthy. Two hundred and fifty-five apprehensions have been made since the installation in 1982. There has also been a dramatic drop in stolen property.

In an effort to curtail drug use and sales on school property, the Department of Security operates a sniffer dog program that uses five Labrador Retrievers. The dogs are taken into the schools to check out locker rooms, lockers, hallways, parking lots, etc., for the presence of drugs. Schools that have had the benefit of this service feel that the presence of the dogs has been a major deterrent to drug use and possession on campus.

Education

The Security Department's philosophy stresses the belief that one of the best means to combat crime is to educate students about crime and how to avoid being victimized. Three full-time personnel present programs on a variety of topics such as drug education/prevention, sexual assault, and child abuse.

The drug education effort includes the "Naturally High" Program, SADD (Students Against Driving Drunk), and the newest program, the Peer Facilitators, implemented in January 1986. Drug-free teens from 12 district schools were trained to present the "Naturally High" Program. These students visited 18 elementary schools to present the program to approximately 3,000 kindergarten and first grade students. Besides the obvious benefit of providing a positive role model for the young children, the Peer Facilitator program offered participants an opportunity to gain personal understanding and to sharpen their interpersonal skills.

Another aspect of the department's educational service is the formation of Crime Watch Clubs in 16 schools. Ultimately, the department would like to see these clubs in every secondary school.

St. Louis Public Schools
Division of Special Services
Samuel Miller, Director

1517 S. Theresa Ave.
St. Louis, Mo. 63104

A security officer is assigned to each of the St. Louis secondary schools to assist the principal and faculty in maintaining an environment conducive to learning. Specifically, the security officer is charged with preserving peace and preventing crime in and around school property. The security officer has the power to arrest and detain offenders.

The security officer's primary function is to ensure the safety and well-being of students and school personnel, and the security of the buildings and their contents.

Security officers attempt to resolve less serious acts of misconduct without arrests. When warranted, the officers refer offenders to building administrators for disciplinary action. Upon authorization of the building principal, the officer may call for assistance from the police and/or fire department.

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This Practitioner was developed by Peter D. Blauvelt, director of security services, Prince Georges County Schools, Maryland.

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